

Visitors to Discover the Great Blue Herons of Golden Gate Park

Golden Gate Audubon Society and the California Academy of Sciences are teaming up once again to sponsor the Heron Explainers Project, which trains high school and college interns from CAS and GGAS to educate visitors on the nesting behavior of the great blue herons. In 1993, great blue herons began nesting at Stow Lake. To date, 44 chicks have fledged.

The highly visible nests provide a remarkable opportunity for children and adults to observe these fascinating birds. Student interpreters will be stationed along the path at Stow Lake on Sundays throughout May and Saturdays, June 2 through 16.

In addition to acting as interpreters, the interns will monitor the nests and collect data for the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory Colonial Waterbird Monitoring Project.

Return of the Terns

Mark your calendars for Sunday, June 30! The East Bay Regional Park District will be hosting a special event focussing on the Endangered Least Terns at the Crab Cove Visitor Center in Alameda. See a slide show, make a craft, or visit information tables of various environmental groups. You will also have an opportunity to take a bus trip to the nearby Alameda Wildlife Refuge and see live terns at the refuge! (\$6.00 bus fee and reservations required.) For more information please contact the Crab Cove Visitor Center at (510) 521-6887.

Led by Nancy DeStefanis, the interns will position spotting scopes for visitors to Stow Lake and will help them spot the birds and nests, as well as explain the herons' behavior.

The Heron Explainers Project is part of the Stow Lake Education Project, an environmental education program for youth from the San Francisco Unified School District. Golden Gate Audubon Society is also a sponsor of the Stow Lake Education Project.

On May 17, 2002, the first annual Stow Lake Education Project Bird Calling Contest will take place at the Josephine Randall Science Museum in San Francisco. Fourth graders from Sunnyside and Lakeshore Elementary Schools will participate and compete with calls, costumes and cool facts about their chosen bird. Members of the public are invited to attend this free program. The Contest begins at 10:30 a.m. and concludes at noon.

Heron Explainers Station at Stow Lake:
Please follow signs at the Stow Lake Boathouse to the Observation site.

Sundays, May 5, 12, 19, 26:

10:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Saturdays, June 1, 8 and 15:

10:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Questions about the Heron Explainers Project or First Annual Bird Calling Contest—please contact Nancy DeStefanis at myblueherons@yahoo.com

The Heron Explainers Project, founded and directed by Nancy DeStefanis of the Stow Lake Education Project, begins its third year in May.

Mother's Day Barbecue Sunday, May 12

We hope our Audubon members, friends and families will join us for this 47th traditional Mother's Day celebration at the sylvan Volunteer Canyon on Highway 1, 1/3 of a mile south of Audubon Canyon Ranch's Bolinas Lagoon (ACR) and three miles north of Stinson Beach. This event is a benefit for both MAS and ACR. Delicious barbecued chicken or vegetarian quiche (made by our own Barbara Salzman) will be served with all the trimmings including coffee, tea, lemonade, or milk between noon and 2 PM. Soft drinks, wine, and beer will be available for sale. The cost is \$15 for adults and \$10 for children under ten years of age. Sign up soon as space is limited. For more information, call Betsy Richardson at 415/454-5469.

Co-chairs Lisa Cassidy and Mimi Burton can always use volunteers on the day before or on the day of the barbecue. Can you help with food preparations? Can you barbecue? Help with serving? Cleanup? Those of us who volunteer have a great time! Call Mardi Leland at 415/785-4755 if you can help.

For reservations, mail this form to Becky Pryce, 1540 Center Rd, #387, Novato, CA 94947.

Reservation Form Marin Audubon Society's Mother's Day Barbecue

Name _____

Address _____

City, ZIP _____

Telephone _____

Please make reservations for (number of meals):

_____ Adults (chicken) _____ Adults (quiche)

_____ Children (chicken) _____ Children (quiche)

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Donations

Least Tern (\$200 or more)

Anonymous
Michael Ward with a match from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

Clapper Rail (\$100 or more)

Kathy Down
Eugenia Caldwell

Gifts (to \$99)

Charlotte Nolan, Pat Gannon, Berkeley Garden Club, Ruth Dement, Elizabeth Rieger, Victor Kemendrwsy, John Bacon, Rachel Watson-Clark, Mrs Laurence Stein, Lois Whitney, Else Marie Jensen, Ann Elise and Daniel Emerson, Wanda Mar and Bill Pinkham, Martin Reutinger, Scott Benson, Mary Frank, Ronald Morrison, Gretchen Thometz, and Ken Albourn on behalf of Sam Thompson

In Memorium

Alyce Marie Chasse in memory of Clifford Sojourner, John and Ann Kadyk in memory of Paul Green and honoring Helen Green, Edna

Komenaka and Clara Arakaki, Lynda Bradford, Virginia Fox, Jean Todd, Kaoru Reynolds, all in memory of Daisey Uyeda, and Marilyn Tepper and Robert Curley in memory of Jean Dingerson.

Gateway Donations

GGAS was fortunate to have a very successful campaign in raising funds in our charge to fight detrimental development at the Gateway. A summary of contributors follows:

\$1500
Kenneth Sarcahan

\$800 – \$900:
Amelia and Peter Wilson

\$500
Regional Parks Association

\$200 – \$250
Suzanne Jones
Carol Pachl
Edward Pope

\$100
Jane and Stewart Bowyer
Kathy Down

Maartje and Harold Flinn
Lost Valley Homeowners' Association
Keith Horrocks
Cheryl and Robert Mes
Sveinn Erik Olafsson
Robert Townsend
Gail Ann Williams

To \$99
Anonymous, Phillippa and Peter Althaus, Susan Bell, Margot Bevis, James Carrick, Mary Ann Carick, Nicole and Henry Collins, Priscilla Cooper, John Davies, Nina Davies, Seth Feinberg, Patricia Gannon, Berkeley Garden Club, Charles Gouker, Carol Gustafson, Leslie Hudak, WH Hudson, Edward Janney, DA and Don Jonte, Janet and Vincent Maiorana, Ann Meyer, Doris and Rhys Miller, LuAnn Norton, Julie and Frank Nelson, Janice Jones Prince, Sandy Roadcap, Adele and David Seaborg, Fred Smith, Catherine Stone, Tom Thoreau, and Susan Watson.

A bequest to the Golden Gate Audubon Society helps make it possible for us to continue the good work we do in helping to preserve our natural world for future generations. If you are interested in setting up a bequest we have a team of experts who will be glad to help you. Please call Arthur Feinstein at our GGAS Office for more information. Our phone number is 510-843-2222. Thanks.

Come count or band hawks!

Tens of thousands of birds of prey pass over the Marin Headlands each fall, and last year, more than 260 volunteers monitored this flight for the Golden

Gate Raptor Observatory. Since 1985, the GGRO has organized ground counts, banding, and other studies in order to monitor our region's raptors over the long-term. We're currently

looking for new volunteers to commit to one day every two weeks in the August through December 2002 migration season. For more information, call GGRO asap (415) 331-0750 or e-mail us at ggro@ggnpa.org. Visit GGRO's website at www.ggro.org.

An Apology For Our Lateness and A Plan to Make it Better

For two months now, March and April, you have received the Gull after the fact. It has been so late that some of its information has been irrelevant.

We've heard from many of you of your dissatisfaction. We are so very sorry (although we are gratified that so many of you do rely on the Gull).

We hope we have the solution.

Starting with the June issue, we will be reducing the number of Gulls we produce each year from 11 to 10. We will have a combined June, July, August summer issue. With the cost savings, we will engage a professional to get the Gull out in timely manner. We truly hope that by the September Gull everyone will get our newsletter early enough in the month to allow

you to enjoy and take part in the many activities we offer from field trips and programs to conservation activities to our Quail restoration program and many others. Again, we truly apologize and we look forward to never having to go through this again.

Sincerely yours,

Arthur Feinstein and Dana Kokubun, Co-Executive Directors,
President Leslie Lethridge and the entire GGAS Board of Directors

Field Trip Reports April 2002

San Leandro Marina to Hayward Shoreline Regional Park, 1/20, Kathy Jarrett. 8 participants. This trip was a spectacular experience. Two people had never been on an Audubon trip before; several had been on many; there were beginners and experienced birders. Using bicycles meant we covered a much longer distance [on the Bay Trail] and saw a great number and variety of birds. Osprey, White-tailed Kite, Peregrine Falcon, Black-bellied Plover, Aechmophorus Grebe. **Woodbridge Road Ecological Preserve**, 1/27, Jim Rowth: 13 participants; 44 species. Sandhill crane, Tundra swan, Pacific Golden Plover. **Grizzly Island**, 2/2, Robin Leong. 40 participants! 85 species. Those who made the effort to get up early this first warm day got to see a Peregrine Falcon and the Suisun Song Sparrow. Also of special interest: several Burrowing Owls, a Great Horned Owl and Barn Owl, a Ferruginous Hawk and a dark morph Red-tailed Hawk. Near Island Slough a Rough-legged Hawk gave everyone a great look. The best of the trip was seeing 2

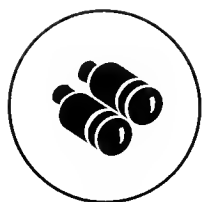
Merlins go at each other. **Strybing Arboretum**, 2/3, Allan Ridley, Helen McKenna, Heather Chase, Linda Lyon. 60 participants! 57 species. Excellent prolonged views of White-throated Sparrow, Coopers Hawk and Anna's Hummingbird on a nest. Red-bellied Sapsucker, Pine Siskin. A Varied Thrush gave us a good look as it perched atop a Monterey Pine, an unusual location for this species. No Quail by sight or sound. **Panoche Valley**, 2/3, Chris Carpenter. 15 participants; 62 species. Mountain Bluebirds, raptors, wintering sparrows, Lewis's Woodpecker, Phainopepla. Bird numbers and species down on this trip this year. Continuing absence of Mountain Plover. **Coyote Hills**, 2/15, Anna Wilcox, Jean Marie Spoelman. 19 participants; 75 species. **Aquatic Park**, 2/16, Kathy Jarrett. Black-crowned Night Heron, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Snowy Egret, Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, Hooded Merganser.

Westgate Landing County Park [Central Valley], 1/5, Bob Lewis: 23 participants, 69 species. This

county park provided 2 Green Herons, and Vs of swans were a portent of more to come. Groups of cranes [est. 300] traced the overcast sky, and a mystery falcon shot by. Woodbridge had ducks; Staten Island gave us great looks at Sandhills and Tundra Swans [est. 400]. Ferruginous and Sharp-shinned Hawks.

Arrowhead Marsh, 1-6, Jeffrey Black: 15 participants, 48 species. Merlin atop telephone pole eating recent kills, good look at Barrow's Goldeneye, 5 Clapper Rails taking a bath, Anna's Hummingbird. Great variety of wintering birds, easy to see. **Strybing Arboretum, 1/6**, Allan Ridley, Helen McKenna, Josiah Clark, Rich Ferrick, Heather Chase: 40 participants, 50 species. Because of recurring large turnouts for these monthly events, Allan and Helen have created smaller groups by bringing in more leaders! Female bufflehead, female Hooded Merganser, California Quail [2 male], Red-breasted Sapsuckers, Nashville Warbler. **Arrowhead Marsh, 1/9**, Anna Wilcox, Jean-Marie Spoelman: 26 participants, 65 species. Northern Pintail, Blue-winged Teal, Cinnamon Teal.

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March 1, 2002 - March 31, 2002

March brought us an unusually early start to spring migration. Wintering waterfowl, raptors, and passerines moved out of our region earlier than usual, and before we knew it, new arrivals from the south were upon us. Warbling Vireos, Western Kingbirds, Pacific-Slope Flycatchers, Bullock's Orioles, and Black-headed Grosbeaks began to stream in toward the end of the month. A number of new county records for early arrival were set this March, and some are detailed below. Hats off to county record-keepers like Santa Cruz's David Suddjian; their conscientious work in compiling sightings gives us data with which to compare arrival and departure times among years. Only with such data can we accurately judge, for example, just how "early" a spring migration we are experiencing.

The month saw many types of migratory and dispersive movement. Notable was a marked influx of the famously nomadic Lawrence's Goldfinch. Black-legged Kittiwakes pushed through in a dense wave over just a few days. And Yellow-billed Magpies showed evidence of a little-discussed seasonal dispersal pattern.

The month was also notable for its most talked-about bird. Whether or not the Falcated Duck at Honey Lake (not to mention the two in Humboldt County) is one day declared wild and "countable" by the CBRC, many birders who chased this one came away impressed with the bird's pizzazz – and managed to find a few other species while they were up there, too.

Loons to Ducks

The **Yellow-billed Loon** (*Gavia adamsii*) wintering on Monterey Bay, MTY, thrilled those on the Mar. 24 SJPT, including many ornithologists in town for the Partners in Flight conference at Asilomar. A second Yellow-billed Loon report came from the Lighthouse at PRNS Mar. 20 (PBa, AH, DP). A Red-necked Grebe lingered as

late as Mar. 26 off Seaside, MTY (BW).

The scientists gathering at Asilomar also enjoyed a Laysan Albatross on their Mar. 24 SJPT on Monterey Bay. The Point Arena Cove, MEN, Laysan remained through at least Mar. 20, delighting numerous birders – and surfers, who get even closer to it than we do! Up to 30 Black-footed Albatrosses were seen on PTs off Crescent City, DN, Mar. 24, and on Monterey Bay, MTY, Mar. 24 and 28 (JH, SJPT, JC, DF), while a lone bird was spotted from shore from Bolsa Pt., SM, Mar. 13 (RSTh). A sea-watch from Bolsa Pt. 3 days later produced a Northern Fulmar (AW, RSTh), and small numbers were seen on Mar. 24 PTs on Monterey Bay, MTY (SJPT) and off Crescent City, DN (JH).

Also spied from shore was a Pink-footed Shearwater Mar. 14 from Ft. Funston, SF (PS). Small numbers of Pink-footed, Sooty, and Short-tailed Shearwaters were seen on several PTs, with a Flesh-footed Shearwater seen on Monterey Bay Mar. 4 (MH). Two **Manx Shearwaters** (*Puffinus puffinus*) were reported from Monterey Bay Mar. 4 (MH), while an observer on one SJPT boat Mar. 24 reported 1 Manx (SB). Whether Manx Shearwaters, an Atlantic species, are increasing off the California coast or whether observers are more keenly looking for them is uncertain; what is certain is that their identification is tricky. The more-expected Black-vented Shearwater numbered 200 on Monterey Bay Mar. 4 (MH), while 2 were found there Mar. 24 (JC) and 1 flew past Bolsa Pt, SM, the same day (RSTh, AE).

A Cattle Egret was seen at Moon Glow Dairy, MTY, Mar. 16 (RF) and 29 (JG). Ninety Turkey Vultures passed over SM Mar. 9, a number high enough to indicate migratory movement (RSTh).

The **Emperor Goose** (*Chen canagica*) wintering at Bodega Bay, SON, stayed through at least the 20th (mob), while 1 or 2 other(s) were seen

at Arcata, HUM, Mar. 10 (JT) and 28 (KR). While the great goose flocks of the Central Valley began to stream northward, lone individuals of Greater White-fronted, Snow, and Ross's Geese lingered at several coastal locations. Late Tundra Swans tarried in SIE Mar. 24 (SG), HUM Mar. 27 (PSP), and AMA Mar. 29 (SG, JL).

Although waterfowl began moving north early this spring, northern California birders made some interesting sightings. The biggest headlines belonged to the **Falcated Duck** (*Anas falcata*), a Eurasian teal occurring very rarely in North America. One male Falcated Duck showed up at the Honey L. W.A., LAS, Mar. 19 (JS; mob), while 2 more were found at Elk R. W.A. near Eureka, HUM, Mar. 28 (MM). Because waterfowl are so frequently kept in captivity, the origin of these birds has been debated, and listers will await eventual ruling of the CBRC. Currently this species is one of the handful on the CBRC's "Supplemental List" of birds for which the committee could not reach consensus in the past. Factors working in favor of a wild origin for the Honey L. bird include the observation that it is unbanded, and the fact that at least 1 Falcated Duck also appeared in Washington state this winter. The Honey L. individual remained past the 31st, courting female Gadwall and looking quite handsome. A duck of perhaps more questionable origin was the White-cheeked Pintail reported from the Lathrop Sewage Ponds, SJ, Mar. 13 (SJB), probably the same individual first found there some months ago.

Several "Eurasian" Green-winged Teal – an Old-World taxon that may in the future be elevated to species status – were reported. Single males were at Sacramento NWR, GLE, Mar. 5 (TM); Redwood Shores, SM, Mar. 15–17 (RSTh; AE, AW); Bolinas Lagoon, MRN, Mar. 23 (KS, TC); the RCP, SAC, Mar. 24–30 (JTr; TR); and Yolo Bypass W.A., YOL, Mar. 27–31 (RJ;

mob). Eurasian Wigeon were widespread, with a high count of 7 birds (0.8–0.9% of wigeon present) at Delevan NWR, COL, Mar. 12 (JK, RM).

A drake Tufted Duck acquired a full tuft and provided many observers stunning views at tiny Westlake Pond, SCZ, through at least the 25th. A Harlequin Duck appeared off Seaside, MTY, Mar. 2 (AB), and two males frequented Monterey's outer marina Mar. 18–24 (JLo; mob). Thirteen were seen at their traditional Glass Beach, MEN, abode Mar. 3 (AE). Two Long-tailed Ducks were found in Cleone, MEN, Mar. 2 (CV, mob), with 1 remaining till the 15th (DT), while another was seen from Bolsa Pt., SM, Mar. 24 (RSTh, AE). A female continued at the Vic Fazio W.A., YOL on Mar. 3 and 5 (mob). Inland Barrow's Goldeneyes lingered until at least Mar. 24 in LAS and TEH (MF), and a Red-breasted Merganser graced the Nimbus Fish Hatchery, SAC, Mar. 8–24 (DJ, CC).

Raptors to Alcids

An adult Northern Goshawk flew over Parson's Creek Canyon, MEN, Mar. 8 (CV). Swainson's Hawks trickled in throughout the month, and one was found nest-building on the 14th (SG). The latest date for Rough-legged Hawk was Mar. 30 in SJ (CP).

Up to 2 Chukars were seen at Shotgun Pass, SBT, on several days during the month (mob), and Greater Sage Grouse began lekking in the n. and e. at month's end.

Three, then 4, Pacific Golden-Plovers were at the Modesto Sewage Ponds, STA, Mar. 8–21 (EG; oob), while 2 were at a flooded field in YOL Mar. 31 (RA), and a whopping 17 were reported from the Eel R. mouth, Loleta, HUM Mar. 26 (SMc). Lesser Yellowlegs numbered 16 on Mar. 23 at Woodbridge Rd, SJ (DY) and 1 at Yolo Bypass W.A. Mar. 27 (RJ). Four Rock Sandpipers were at MacKerricher SP, MEN, Mar. 3 (AE), and 2 were there on the 15th (DT). A Red Phalarope was off Bolsa Pt., SM, Mar. 16 (AW, RSTh), and a Phalarope sp. off Ft. Funston, SF, Mar. 14 (PS).

A Mew Gull wandered far inland to provide Lassen Co. with its 4th

Wood Warbler Sightings

Tennessee Warbler

Mar. 3 Middle L, GGP, SF DM

Nashville Warbler

Mar. 3 Natural Bridges MS; LG,
(con't.) SP, SCZ MB

Mar. 11 159 Jewett, Ft. DT
Bragg, MEN

Mar. 15, 16 Merrie Way, SF BF; JM,
(con't.) oob

Mar. 16, 18 Palo Alto, SCL PBr
(con't.)

Mar. 26 Coyote Pt, SM RSTh

Northern Parula

Mar. 17 Washington Park, RSTh
(con't.) Burlingame, SM

Mar. 21–24 Veteran's Park, AEd; mob
Livermore, ALA

Black-throated Blue Warbler

Mar. 12, 14 Locust St., Santa JW; DVP
(con't.) Cruz

Palm Warbler

Mar. 3 North L, GGP, SF TM

Northern Waterthrush

Mar. 16 Garcia River V
Bottom, MEN

MacGillivray's Warbler

Feb. 28 O'Neill Forebay, DY
MER

Abbreviations for Observers: KA, Ken Archibald; RA, Roger Adamson; AB, Alan Baldridge; BB, Bill Bousman; BBe, Bonnie Bedzin; DB, Dennis Braddy; FB, Florence Bennett; HB, Herb Brandt; MB, Matt Brady; PB, Patricia Braddy; PBA, Paul Baxter; PBr, Phyllis Browning; SB, Steve Bailey; AC, Alexander Cruz; BC, Brian Christman; CC, Chris Conard; HC, Herr Chaniot; JC, Jay Carlisle; TC, Ted Chandik; BD, Bruce Deuel; JD, Jim Danzenbaker; MD, Mike Danzenbaker; MDo, Matthew Dodder; PD, Peggy Don; SD, Stephen

Davies; AE, Al Eisner; AEd, Art Edwards; CE, Chris Emmons; ME, Mark Eaton; BF, Brian Fitch; DE, Daniel Farrar; EF, Eric Fenss; MF, Mike Feighner; RF, Rob Fowler; EG, Ed Greaves; JG, John Gideon; LG, Lois Goldfrank; RG, Rudy Gutierrez; SG, Steve Glover; SGe, Steve Gerow; AH, Alistair Henderson; JHH, Hugh Harvey; JH, John Hunter; KH, Keith Hansen; MH, Mitch Heindel; AJ, Alvaro Jaramillo; DJ, Dave Johnson; RJ, Rixon Johnson; JK, Jon King; JL, John Luther; JLi, Janet Little; RL, Randy Little; JLo, Jerry Loomis; TL, Thomas Leeman; CM, Clyde Morris; DM, Dan Murphy; JM, Joe Morlan; MM, Melvin McKinney; RM, Richard Millington; SM, Sylvia Macon; SMC, Sean McAllister; TM, Todd Morris; TMA, Tim Manolis; WM, Wayne Macon; CP, Cheri Pillsbury; DP, Dan Peaks; EP, Eric Preston; MP, Michael Perrone; MPO, Michael Powers; WP, William Park; BK, Bob Keiling; BRi, Bob Richmond; KR, Kerry Ross; MK, Mike Rogers; TR, Terry Ronneberg; BS, Bob Schieferstein; DS, David Suddjian; DSi, Dan Singer; JS, John Sterling; JSe, Jamie Seneven; KS, Kendric Smith; LS, Linda Sullivan; MS, Michelle Scott; PS, Paul Saraceni; PSp, Paul Springer; SAS, Shan Aguilar-Stone; SS, Sharon Stohrer; DJ, Dorothy Tobkin; JT, Jim Tietz; JTr, John Trochet; RSTh, Ron S. Thorn; MU, Myra Ulvang; V, Vishnu; AV, Ann Verdi; CV, Chuck Vaughn; DVP, David Vander Pluym; AW, Adam Winer; BW, Brian Weed; BWd, Bud Widdowson; BWi, Brian Williams; JW, Jay Withgott; RW, Roger Wolfe; DY, David Yee.

Semicolons separate original observer(s) from subsequent observer(s). Abbreviation "mob" = many observers; "oob" = other observers. All information is compiled from rare bird alert transcripts and regional listservs; I apologize for any errors or omissions. Thanks to Jay Withgott for reviewing the final draft. Jay will return as the regular Observations columnist next month.

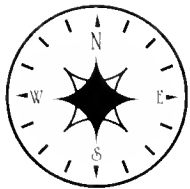
Abbreviations for Counties and Others: ALA, Alameda; AMA, Amador; CLV, Calaveras; CBRC, California Bird Records Committee; CC, Contra Costa; CCFS, Coyote Creek Field Station; Co., County; COL, Colusa; CP, County Park; Cr., Creek; DN, Del Norte; FRE, Fresno; GGP, Golden Gate Park; GLE, Glenn; Hwy, Highway; HUM, Humboldt; L., Lake; LAK, Lake; LAS, Lassen; MEN, Mendocino; MER, Merced; MRN, Marin; MTY, Monterey; n./s./e./w. = north/south/east/west; NWR, National Wildlife Refuge; PLA, Placer; Pt, Point; PRNS, Pt. Reyes National Seashore; PT, pelagic trip; R., River; RCP, Rio Cosumnes Preserve; Rd, Road; Res., Reservoir; RP, Regional Park; SAC, Sacramento; SBT, San Benito; SCL, Santa Clara; SCZ, Santa Cruz; SF, San Francisco; SHA, Shasta; SIE, Sierra; SJ, San Joaquin; SJB, San Joaquin Birds listserv; SJPT, Shearwater Journeys pelagic trip; SM, San Mateo; SON, Sonoma; SP, State Park; STA, Stanislaus; TEH, Tehama; TUO, Tuolumne; W.A., Wildlife Area; YOL, Yolo.

record on Mar. 30 at the Susanville Sewage Ponds (TMA). At Kutras L., SHA, Mar. 7, a single Thayer's Gull was noted (BD). The L. Cunningham, SCL, **Lesser Black-backed Gull** (*Larus fuscus*) remained through at least the 10th, while on the 9th a different adult Lesser Black-backed was located at the Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant pond near CCFS, SCL (MR). This is presumably the same individual first found in this area 6 winters ago and seen sporadically since. Two Glaucous-winged Gulls lingered near Kutras L., SHA, Mar. 23 (BD, oob), and several reports of Glaucous Gull came in: Mar. 2 at the Navarro R. mouth, MEN (CV, mob); Mar. 10 at L. Almaden, SCL (EF, oob); Mar. 11 at Soquel Cr mouth,

SCZ (RW); and Mar. 20 at Yolo County Central Landfill (JK, RM). Black-legged Kittiwakes staged a major northward movement along the coast during a period of favorable weather in early March, peaking roughly the 11th–14th (mob). High count was 1,780 birds passing by during a 4-hour sea watch on Mar. 15 from Bolsa Point, SM (RSTh).

A returning Caspian Tern flew by Coyote Pt, SM, Mar. 14 (RSTh), and roughly 20 others arrived at various locales between the 20th and 31st (mob). High count for the Charleston Slough, SCL, Black Skimmers was 15 (MD, mob), and a single Skimmer turned up at Elkhorn Slough Mar. 29

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Field Trips Calendar

Saturday, May 4, WILDCAT CANYON REGIONAL PARK

See April GULL for details on this trip. Meet at 8 a.m. by the Arlington Clubhouse on Arlington Ave. [next to the tennis courts between Brewster Dr. and Thors Bay Rd.] in El Cerrito. Leader: Malcolm Sproul [925] 376-8945 [*]

Sunday, May 5, STRYBING ARBORETUM, San Francisco

See April GULL for details on this trip. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the front gate of the Arboretum [9th Ave. and Lincoln Way] for this half-day trip. GGAS Co-Leaders: Allan Ridley, Heather Chase, Rick Ferrick; Strybing Arboretum Docents: Helen McKenna, Linda Lyons [415] 566-3241.

Wednesday, May 8, MINI-TRIP TO BRIONES REGIONAL PARK

See April GULL for details on this trip. Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the west entrance to the Park, off Bear Creek Road, at the parking area on the left, just beyond the fee booth. Leaders: Anna Wilcox [510] 351-9301, and Jean-Marie Spoelman. [S]

Wednesday, May 8, EVENING WALK IN WILDCAT CANYON

See April GULL for details on this trip. Meet at 6 p.m. sharp at the trailhead at the very end of Rifle Range Road in El Cerrito. We shall bird until dusk. Leader: Jeffrey Black [510] 526-7068.

Saturday, May 11, ARROWHEAD MARSH, Alameda County

Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the fishing pier at the end of the road. Take I-880 south to Hegenberger, turn right at the stop light onto Hegenberger and then right at the first stop light onto Edgewater. Drive past Pardee Lane, over the bridge and take a left immediately after the bridge into the park-

ing lot. We will congregate at the pedestrian bridge over the Elmhurst Slough and stroll past Arrowhead Marsh and around Mitigation Marsh, stopping whenever we see a bird. Bring a scope if you have one. Beginners especially welcome. Heavy rain cancels. Please don't call after 9 p.m. Leader: Courtenay Peddle [510] 532-8911 capeddle@there.net

Sunday, May 12, LEONA HEIGHTS REGIONAL OPEN SPACE, Oakland

Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot for this half day walk featuring riparian and scrub habitat, singing Wrentit, California Thrashers and more. From Berkeley take 580 south to the Keller offramp [about 1.5 miles past the junction with Hwy. 13]. Go east [uphill] on Keller about 8/10 miles to Campus Drive. Turn left onto Campus, then right onto Canyon Oaks Drive [this right turn seems like turning into a private parking lot for the Fidgemont condominium complex]. Go left to the end to the parking lot. Beginners welcome. No facilities. Leader: Rusty Scalf [510] 666-9936 rscalf@jps.net

Saturday, May 18, BOTHE-NAPA VALLEY STATE PARK

Meet at 9 a.m. at the parking lot in front of the Visitor Center [at right just inside the park entrance]. The park is located on Hwy. 29 about five miles north of St. Helena, and is exceptionally beautiful in spring, full of birds and wildflowers, but rarely crowded with human visitors. From the East Bay, take I-80 north to Vallejo; take the first Vallejo exit and go north on Hwy. 29. From San Francisco, take 101 north to Hwy. 37 [about 20 miles]; turn right on 37 to Sears Point. Go left on Hwy. 121 north and east to Hwy. 29, then north about 20 miles to the park. [Or, go through Oakland as above. The distance is about the same, about 65 miles total.] Allow plenty of time for this drive—it can be foggy and very slow going.

The birding will be largely by ear; the walking, about three miles, is definitely non-athletic. Pileated Woodpecker is a possibility. Bring lunch and liquids. Trip will end early to mid afternoon. Beginners welcome. Rain cancels. Leader: Peter Allen [415] 892-8063. [S]

Saturday, May 18, AQUATIC PARK, San Francisco

Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the foot of the Hyde Street Pier [Hyde & Jefferson] for this beginners bird walk. Discover birds next door to the urban environment. San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park Ranger Carol Kiser will lead this approximately two-three hour walk. Dress in layers. This trip is wheelchair accessible. [415] 561-7100 or 561-7104

Saturday, May 18, UPPER CARMEL VALLEY

This trip is not to be missed! At the peak of the breeding season, Carmel Valley provides an array of breeding birds, including Bullock's Oriole, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Cassin's Vireo, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Western Kingbird, Yellow-billed Magpie and more. Wildflowers should be in full bloom. Meet in the parking lot at Baker's Square at Hwy. 1 and Rio Rd. at 7:30 a.m. The trip will end around 1:00 p.m. Bring water and snacks. Leader: Rick Fournier, Monterey Peninsula Audubon, [831] 632-2473

Saturday, May 25, IRON HORSE TRAIL BICYCLE BIRDING TRIP

Meet at Rockridge BART station at the bottom of the escalator at street level at 7:20 a.m. Board train for SF at 7:32; arrive MacArthur 7:35, transfer to Fremont train 7:55 [note concurrent arrivals at MacArthur], arrive Bay Fair 8 a.m.; transfer to Dublin/Pleasanton train 8:16 a.m., arrive Dublin/Pleasanton at 8:32. Meet just outside the turnstile, realizing that the leader's arrival could be 20 min. later if connections are missed. The

trip will end at the Pleasant Hill BART station by 3 p.m. This 20-mile excursion between Dublin and Pleasant Hill is almost entirely on dedicated bicycle paths. Part of the East Bay Regional Park District, the Iron Horse Regional Trail is on the old Sacramento Northern Railroad right-of-way, and quite level. In addition to birding along the trail, we will go to Hap Magee Ranch Park in Alamo and Heather Farms Park in Walnut Creek. Recently sited birds: Nuttall's Woodpecker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Lesser Goldfinch, White-throated Swift, Red-winged Blackbird, Black Phoebe, Red-tailed Hawk, Kestrel. Bicycle helmet obligatory. It may be cool early and warm later in the day; dress accordingly. Bring sun screen, lunch and liquids. We will stop in Danville, where you may purchase food/drink, both at the Saturday Farmer's Market and at nearby Trader Joe's. Rain cancels. Please call if you plan to join the group at some point after the Rockridge BART station so that we will wait for you, and/or to get cell phone number. Leader: Kathy Jarrett [510] 547-1233
kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com

Saturday, May 25, BRIONES REGIONAL PARK

Meet at 8 a.m. at the Briones Regional Park Bear Valley entrance parking lot. This will be a half-day trip seeking flycatchers, bluebirds, warblers, vireos and Lazuli Bunting. There are picnic tables nearby if you wish to bring lunch. Leader: Bob Lewis [510] 845-5001 RLewis0727@aol.com \$

Friday-Sunday, May 31-June 2, YOSEMITE'S BIRD LIFE

See April GULL for details on this trip. Meet Friday, May 31 at 3 p.m. in the large parking lot just inside the Hwy. 120 [Big Oak Flat] entrance to the Park. We will bird the full day on Saturday and on Sunday until about 3 p.m. Bring warm clothes, rainwear, rubber boots and a large flashlight for owling. Bring a lunch for

Saturday. Leaders: Dave Quady [510] 704-9353 and Bob Lewis. \$ [*]

Saturday, June 1, POINT REYES NATIONAL SEASHORE

Meet at 9 a.m. at Whitehouse Pool just east of the intersection of Bear Valley Rd. and Sir Francis Drake Blvd., north of Park Headquarters. Specific destinations will depend on the birds and the weather but our particular focus will be searching for vagrants. Bring lunch and liquids. Dress for the capricious coastal climate. Leader: Ken Burton [415] 669-1847

Saturday, June 1, ELKHORN SLOUGH, Monterey County

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserves Visitor Center. Elkhorn Slough has been recognized as an Important Bird Area of international significance. We'll kick off the morning birding the Reserve then pending further interest, continue out to Moss Landing and Moon Glow Dairy in the afternoon. Specialties this time of year are the Reserve's nesting Caspian Terns, Great Blue Herons, Great Egrets and Double-crested Cormorants. Other possibilities include Warbling and Cassin's Vireos, six different species of warblers. Expect 50+ species for our efforts. Great trip for all levels of birders. A \$2.50 entrance fee required at the Reserve. The Elkhorn Slough is located about halfway between Santa Cruz and Monterey. From the Bay Area take Hwy. 101 south from San Jose. Turn right onto San Miguel Canyon Rd. [Prunedale] and go .75 mi. on San Miguel Canyon Rd., turn left onto Castroville Blvd. and go 3+ mi. on Castroville Blvd., turn north onto Elkhorn Rd. and go 2.2 mi. on Elkhorn Rd., turn left into Reserve entryway. Leader: Rick Fournier, Monterey Peninsula Audubon, [851] 632-2473 \$

Sunday, June 2, STRYBING ARBORETUM, San Francisco

See April GULL for details on this

trip. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the front gate of the Arboretum [9th Ave. and Lincoln Way] for this half-day trip. GGAS Co-Leaders: Allan Ridley, Heather Chase, Rick Ferrick; Strybing Arboretum Docents: Helen McKenna, Linda Lyons [415] 566-3241.

Wednesday, June 5, MINI-TRIP TO REDWOOD REGIONAL PARK, Oakland

Meet at 9:30 a.m. in the small parking lot on the left, just past the kiosk. Take the Warren Freeway [Hwy. 13], exit onto Redwood Rd., and proceed east about three miles to the park entrance on the left. We may see Black-headed Grosbeak, Swainson's Thrush, Bullock's Oriole, Solitary, Hutton's and Warbling Vireos. Bring lunch. Leaders: Anna Wilcox [510] 351-9301 and Jean-Marie Spoelman. \$ [*]

Saturday, June 8, AQUATIC PARK, San Francisco

See May 18 above for details. Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the foot of the Hyde Street Pier [Hyde & Jefferson] for this beginners bird walk. SFMNP Ranger Carol Kiser will lead this approximately two-three hour walk. Dress in layers. This trip is wheelchair accessible. [415] 561-7100 or 561-7104

Saturday-Sunday, June 15-16, YUBA PASS, SIERRA VALLEY

On Saturday, meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Yuba Pass summit parking area [Hwy. 49], 19 mi. east of Sierra City. Take I-80 to Truckee, go north on Hwy. 89 to Sierraville and take Hwy. 49 west to Yuba Summit. [Or, take Hwy. 49 northeast from Auburn for a slower but more scenic route.] We will bird the mountain areas for summer residents including Dippers, flycatchers, warblers, and Calliope Hummingbirds. On Sunday meet at 8 a.m. at the intersection of Hwy. 49 and 89 [by the sawmill] about one

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Observations...

Continued from page 5

(JG).

The spring's first returning Pigeon Guillemot was seen Mar. 9 from Bolsa Pt, SM (RSTh), and more began streaming in after the 13th. Small numbers of Ancient and Marbled Murrelets were seen from expected coastal and pelagic localities.

Doves to Thrashers

A White-winged Dove first seen in early Feb. was rediscovered in a residential neighborhood next to Natural Bridges SP, SCZ, Mar. 9–11 (WP, oob; DS). Two Barred Owls first found in Feb. called from Montgomery Woods, MEN, Mar. 24 (V). Single Long-eared Owls were noted at Mercy Hot Springs, FRE, Mar. 16–24 (mob) and Ed Levin CP, SCL, Mar. 31 (DB, PB). Short-eared Owls were noted at 5 locations in YOL, SCL, and ALA (mob). A Saw-whet Owl Mar. 9 at the SF Bay NWR in Fremont, ALA, roosted in full view at shoulder height for a children's birdwalk, providing a first record for the refuge – and oddly, clutching a mouse in its talons

as it slept (CM). Another Saw-whet was heard at Gazos Creek and Cloverdale Rds, SM, that evening (ME, EP).

The spring's first Rufous Hummingbird report came from that very same junction, on Mar. 2 (RSTh); numerous other Rufouses trickled in gradually through the month. Fourteen Vaux's Swifts were seen Mar. 26 in SCZ (CE) and SM (PS); this date is 14 days earlier than the previous SCZ record. One more was seen Mar. 30 in SJ (CP).

A Lewis's Woodpecker remained near Calero Res, SCL, through the 21st (mob), while another was found that day at Ryan Ranch, MTY (AC), and stayed through at least the 30th (MF, RF). Single Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers continued at the Bolinas Nursery, MRN, through the 3rd (KH) and at the Santa Clara Water District Pond, SCL, through the 31st (AV).

A remarkably early Olive-sided Flycatcher was reported Mar. 3 from the UC Santa Cruz campus (MD). The month's only other report was from the 28th, from high-elevation Lyons Reservoir, TUO (BS), where it was 2 weeks early. The spring's first Pacific-

Slope Flycatchers arrived Mar. 13 at Almaden-Quicksilver Park, SCL (JD); 21 more were reported between the 19th and month's end. One in CLV Mar. 28 was about 2 weeks early for that county. Ash-throated Flycatchers were noted Mar. 16 at Mercy Hot Springs, FRE (MDo, BC) and Mar. 31 (2) at RCP, SAC (JTr). The Tropical Kingbird of GGP, SF, remained at the Buffalo Paddock all month (mob). Cassin's Kingbirds were noted along Panoche Rd, SBT, Mar. 2–16 (DB, DSi, MDo, BC), and on San Felipe Rd, SCL, Mar. 31 (BR, oob). The first-of-spring Western Kingbird, Mar. 8 near Corralitos, SCZ, was the earliest ever SCZ arrival by 5 days, and more than 3 weeks ahead of the county's average first return date (DS). The species became numerous in our region by the final week of March.

A Northern Shrike was located on Mapes Rd near the Honey L., LAS, Falcated Duck spot, Mar. 20–26 (BD; oob). Single Cassin's Vireos arrived Mar. 26 at Castle Rock Ridge, SCZ (CE); Mar. 27 at Stevens Cr SP, SCL (PD, LS); and Mar. 29 near Gilroy Hot Springs Rd/Canada Rd, SCL (BR). Three Warbling Vireos on Mar. 8 on

Field Trips Calendar...

Continued from page 7

mile north of Sattley. We will caravan to Sierra Valley looking for birds of the eastern Sierra, including White-faced Ibis, Sandhill Crane, Sage Thrasher and Yellow-headed Blackbird. Camping is available at the following U.S. Forest Service campgrounds off Hwy. 49: Wild Plum [elev. 3300'] 2 mi. east of Sierra City, and Chapman Creek [elev. 5800'] 8 mi. east of Sierra City. Lodging is available at Sierra Chalet [530] 862-1110, Buttes Motel [530] 862-1170, Herrington's Sierra Pines [530] 862-1151, Bassett's Station Motel [530] 862-1297, Sierra Buttes Inn Motel [530] 862-1191, Yuba River Inn [530] 862-1122, and Busch & Herringbone Country Inn [530]

862-1501. [Check with proprietor for location of the motel or inn.] Leader: Peter Allen [415] 892-8063. [*]

Friday–Sunday, June 28–30, LASSEN VOLCANIC NATIONAL PARK

Join the Murphy family on the annual GGAS family camping excursion to Lassen. In past years we have seen Willow, Hammond's and Dusky Flycatchers, Black Swift, Bald Eagle, Osprey, Townsend's Solitaire, Mountain Bluebird, Calliope Hummingbird, Black-backed Woodpecker, Williamson's Sapsucker and most of the warblers and finches that breed in the mountains. The more serious birders will meet at the Manzanita Lake Campgrounds store at 6:30 a.m. on Friday and again on Sunday. We will bird around the lake

for 2–3 hours, return to camp for breakfast, then rendezvous again at the store at 10:30 a.m. for another outing. The Friday outing will be a leisurely hike of about 3 mi. on one of Lassen's beautiful trails. We may climb as much as 700'. Wear sturdy shoes and bring lunch and liquids. Suntan lotion, a hat, mosquito repellent and warm clothing may also be necessary. On Saturday, we will meet by the camp store at 7:30 a.m. and caravan north to Burney Falls, Fall River Valley and Baum Lake. Bring lunch and liquids. This all day excursion of about 100 mi. will include a 2–3 hr. swim at Lake Britton while watching for Bald Eagles. If you forget your swimsuit, the trails at Burney Park offer a wonderful diversion, and fishermen can try their luck in some of northern California's finest

Eureka Canyon Rd, SCZ, were 13 days ahead of the average first arrival date for SCZ (DS). At least 18 more were reported throughout the region by the 26th (mob).

A Gray Jay was spotted along the MEN-LAK Co. line Mar. 2 (HC; oob). Yellow-billed Magpies were on the move in several areas outside their breeding range, most notably San Francisco, where as many as 9 were seen between the 5th and 14th (HB, MU, PS). Such movement has been noted in the 3 previous years in SF during Feb.-Mar., and only during this brief time window. Could these be seasonally wandering gangs of nonbreeding younger birds? A single magpie appeared at Coyote Pt, SM, Mar. 20-27, hanging around an aviary where other magpies were housed (RSTh).

At least 4 Purple Martins had returned to Business Hwy 80 in Sacramento on Mar. 25 (MP, TL). All 5 widespread swallow species were in in fair numbers by Mar. 10, and numerous by the month's end. Two Blue-gray Gnatcatchers arriving Mar. 8 at Parson's Cr Canyon, MEN, were the earliest ever by 5 days for the

county (CV). Another was found the following day at Candlestick Park, SF (BF). However, no more showed up in the region for another 10 days.

Mountain Bluebirds were seen Mar. 2 and 19 along Little Panoche Rd, SBT/FRE (mob). On Mar. 5 a Townsend's Solitaire was seen on the Black Point Trail, Mount Diablo, CC (KA), and on the 9th, one was along Hwy 16, YOL (FB). The Sage Thrasher found during the winter in Montara, SM, reappeared at its original street corner Mar. 17, and was seen again Mar. 29 (AJ).

Wood Warblers to Finches

As March progressed, the songs of Orange-crowned and Wilson's Warblers became ever more frequent. The first migrant Wilson's was reported Mar. 15 at Winton, ALA (BRI), and one in SCZ the next day was 6 days early for that county (CE). Fourteen reports followed in the next 10 days. Seven Hermit Warblers in CC, SCZ, SF, and SM were spread throughout the month. There was only one report of Black-throated Gray: 2 birds from the Castle Rock Ridge area, SCZ,

Mar. 26 (CE).

Summer Tanagers continued at North L., GGP, SF, Mar. 3 and 8 (JM; mob) and at Capitola, SCZ, Mar. 17 (SAS). Western Tanagers arrived Mar. 13 at L. Almaden, SCL (BR) and Mar. 28 at a Milpitas yard (RL, JLi). An individual seen Mar. 2 and 8 at Natural Bridges SP, SCZ, may have wintered (SGe, LG).

Along Coyote Cr, SCL, the wintering Green-tailed Towhee was still present Mar. 10 (mob). A migrant Chipping Sparrow at Coyote Pt, SM, Mar. 29, was early (RSTh). Lingered Vesper Sparrows were on Panoche Rd, SBT, 24 Mar. (JW, MPo). At Yolo Grasslands RP, YOL, a female Lark Bunting was present Mar. 3 (JSe). Surprisingly, a "Large-billed" Savannah Sparrow turned up along the south shore of O'Neill Forebay, MER, Feb. 28 (DY). This subspecies is a coastal saltmarsh specialist, and the sighting may be the first for the interior of northern California. Along Del Puerto Canyon Rd, STA, Grasshopper Sparrows were first noted singing Mar. 12 (HH). Swamp Sparrows were

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trout streams.] Since this is a long and tiring day we suggest a get-together for dinner, at a nearby restaurant instead of returning to the camp-stove. For the Sunday outing we will meet at 10:30 a.m. to drive through the park, making frequent stops for birding. We should reach the south entrance around 1 p.m. depending upon how long we play in the snow at the summit. For this final event, bring warm gloves, a plastic trash bag for a mini-tobaggan, and a camera.

Stop at our campsite for further information. We will have a campfire every evening beginning at 8 p.m. Bring your own chair [and a cup of wine if you choose]. We will provide hot water for tea or coffee. Check the campground bulletin boards or the office at Hat Creek Resort for our poster, campsite number, and any last

minute changes in the schedule. Directions: From the Bay Area drive north on I-5 to its junction with Hwy. 44 in Redding. Go east on Hwy. 44 to the northwest entrance of Lassen. Camping facilities are available at Manzanita Lake. Lodging is available about 15 mi. north of the park at Hat Creek Resort, Old Station [530] 335-7121. Other information can be obtained from the park headquarters, Mineral, CA 96065. Leaders: Dan and Joan Murphy [415] 564-0074 murphsf@worldnet.att.net \$ [*]

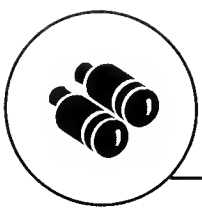
Saturday-Sunday, August 3-4, YOSEMITE ALPINE ECOLOGY

Plan ahead: this trip will be by reservation only and the numbers participating will be limited. Make camping or lodging arrangements early.

County and Forest Service campgrounds are located between Tioga Pass and Lee Vining off Hwy. 120 [4-6 mi. west of Hwy. 595], as well as Tuolumne Meadows Campground in Yosemite. Motels in Lee Vining: Best Western Lakeview Lodge [760] 647-6545, Gateway Motel [760] 647-6767, and Murphy's Motel [760] 647-6316. Look for further information in the June GULL. For trip reservations and meeting details call Leader: George Peyton [510] 453-2609 [leave message] \$ [*]

Trips marked with a (\$) go to parks or other sites which require an entrance fee. Carpooling arrangements will be attempted by leader for trips marked with a (*).

Problems, etc.: If you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, or **IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO LEAD A TRIP**, call Susan Groves, Field Trips Committee Chair, (510) 654-5954. groves@sfsu.edu



A Costa Rica Holiday....mmmm

Your back yard birder flew the coop on Christmas Day and winged her way to Costa Rica with husband, daughter, son-in-law and the two grandchildren. Ryan, age 10, proclaimed it the best trip he'd ever taken. What could be better than 10 days of all sorts of animals appealing to his age group? There were poisonous snakes, constrictor snakes, chameleons, anoles, caiman, crocodiles and lizards that "walked on water" plus 4 species of monkeys frolicking in the jungles along with birds aplenty. Maddie, age 7 1/2, became adept at using binoculars and was my birding buddy. Their young, keen eyes spotted things we might have missed. Naturally, the "grands" made the trip even more exciting for us grandparents even though we passed up horse back riding and zipping along on lines above the rain forest's canopy. We know our limitations!

Birding skills are tested when you try to identify birds in any new area. You aren't familiar with these new birds' habits or their preferred habitats. It's wise to hire a local birder to show you the ropes. Then you aren't just guessing about what you've seen and they point out any identifying characteristics about that specific bird.

With such colorful birds, you imagine you'll have no problem picking a particular one out on the field guide page. Wrong! With over 400 species in Costa Rica, some families are so similar you need that local expert's help. This is specially true among the hummingbirds and euphonia, where there are minor variations that can befuddle you. The only clues are the locations in Costa Rica where they appear: Caribbean side, central mountains or Pacific Coast, north or south. Very tricky indeed. I needed all the help I could get!

I have nothing but the deepest admiration for the bird experts in

rain forests, cloud forests and jungles. These are tough conditions with rain, clouds and humidity fogging your binoculars. In addition, there's a lot of vegetation to contend with! And without perfect light you sometimes miss the color clues you might need. I'm happy to say that most of the mere 68 new species I saw well were much more dramatically colored and beautiful than any picture or photograph could depict. If I had been on a birding tour, I would have had many more on my list, but I am content rather than greedy.

No, I didn't see the Resplendent Quetzal. Everyone else on the trail seemed to have spotted it in Monte Verde's park. But all of us had a great view of a Blue-crowned Motmot at our hotel. And who could complain with the numbers of hummingbirds, large (the Violet Sabrewing) and small? The Little Hermit was so tiny that I thought it was a large flying insect.

We traveled from San Jose to the Caribbean coast, then to Monte Verde, and spent New Year's Eve at Arenal, the most active volcano in the world. It didn't disappoint, letting out steam, lava and loud belches all day long. We couldn't even hear the champagne corks popping at midnight! New Year's Day it nearly knocked us out of bed at 5 a.m. Happy New Year! The area is beautiful albeit dangerous. Vegetation is lush. Lake Arenal reminds one of Switzerland. A flock of ten Fiery-billed Aricaris, a small relative of toucans, were feeding on berries on the hotel grounds, allowing us to snap close-up photographs of their beautiful colors. All of us were charmed by the rather tame coati mundis in the area. And the 100 degree hot springs that flow from the volcano were a bonus to bodies made stiff from bumping over horrible roads for 4 hours.

Finally, we went to the middle of

the Pacific Coast. Here we had a room overlooking the ocean and a view down on great bird habitat. This was my idea of good birding right from our balcony! And the squirrel and white-faced (capuchin) monkeys used our railing and roof on their journeys through the hotel grounds. Huge, brightly colored (rust to orange) male iguanas could be seen displaying in precarious treetop perches hoping for any female who would consider him. One three footer hung out at the pool and startled guests as he cruised by lounge chairs.

Our guide book mentioned that you hadn't experienced WET until you had been to Costa Rica. Some people might get lucky, but rain forests earn their name! Plus it's humid so that drying out is almost impossible. Thank goodness, laundry service is efficient. Also, the roads are the worst you could imagine. The road-building process seems to be reversed with the largest rocks on the top, covering the smaller gravel. No wonder most people prefer to walk, ride horseback or off-road vehicles—it's faster. We spent a lot of time driving from place to place. Everything seems to be 4-5 hours from everywhere else. But you will never meet more gracious and friendly people! It was a wonderful family vacation. Birds and all!

Field Trip Report...

Continued from page 3

Canvasback were well represented in large variety of ducks seen. Clapper Rail. Black-bellied Plover [est. 75], Black-necked Stilt [est. 55], Willet [est. 200], Marbled Godwit [est. 80], Black Turnstone [est. 50], Least Sandpiper [est. 200], Long-billed Dowitcher [est. 150], Yellow-rumped Warbler [est. 20], 1 Common Yellowthroat.

Luis Baptista Memorial Concert Set for Wednesday, May 22, 2002

It has been almost two years since we lost our friend and colleague, Luis Felipe Baptista. I am very pleased to announce that we are hosting a concert in San Francisco, which will benefit the Baptista Memorial Fund.

The California Academy of Sciences, in conjunction with the Conversations at the Herbst series, will present an intimate evening of classical music in memory of Luis Baptista. Pianist Jeffrey Kahane will be joined by distinguished chamber musicians Peter Wyrick and Erick Wyrick in Olivier Messiaen's monumental QUARTET FOR THE END OF TIME. Proceeds from the event will be donated to the Baptista Memorial Fund. To obtain tickets: <http://www.cityboxoffice.com/page25.html>. The program begins at 8:00 p.m.

The BAPTISTA MEMORIAL FUND was established with a nucleus of donations received from friends and colleagues at the time Luis Felipe

Baptista died in June, 2000. During his lifetime he engaged in varied research on birds, mentoring graduate students along the way and establishing collegial relationships worldwide. The Fund will finance the continuance of Dr. Baptista's work through support for projects and appointments that appropriately memorialize his legacy. Charitable contributions to promote and continue avian research can be sent to the Luis Baptista Memorial Fund, California Academy of Sciences, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, CA 94118.

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May Meetings...

Continued from back

the Bay, and perhaps the outline of Twin Peaks. Nearly everything else has changed since Portola's expedition first saw the Bay in 1769 and DeAnza first camped at Mountain Lake and later stood on the south side of the Golden Gate in 1776.

What do we know about San Francisco before it was colonized by Spain? Harry Fuller, Bay Area Naturalist and author of the booklet "Now and Then, San Francisco's Natural History," which he wrote for the San Francisco Field Ornithologists breeding bird atlas, will talk and show slides as he fills us in on the fascinating history of San Francisco.

We hope you have enjoyed these monthly membership programs. The next meetings will be in September. Please watch the Gull for more details about the upcoming programs.

Observations...

Continued from page 9

noted at Coyote Pt, SM, Mar. 11-31 (RSTh), Arcata, HUM, Mar. 16 (JT), and Palo Alto Baylands, SCL, Mar. 20 (BB). At least five Harris's Sparrows frequented our region during March: one continuing at the RCP, SAC, through Mar. 14 (JTr); one continuing near the Loyalton Sewage Ponds, SIE, Mar. 26 (JL); one at a Watsonville, SCZ, feeder most of the month (WM, SM); one near Lincoln, PLA, Mar. 11 (BW); and one near the Honey L., LAS, Falcated Duck location, on Mapes Rd, Mar 20-26 (BWd; oob).

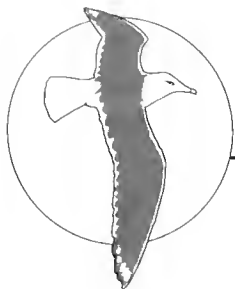
Arriving 11 days earlier to SCZ Co. than any previous Black-headed Grosbeak was one bird at Happy Valley Rd, Santa Cruz, Mar. 5 (BB). Another Black-headed Grosbeak arrived in SCZ on the 19th (DS), and 6 more showed up in the Bay Area

between the 28th and 31st.

Single Great-tailed Grackles were reported Mar. 2 from Roberts L., Seaside, MTY (AB); Mar. 3 from Wildhorse Golf Course, YOL (mob); and Mar. 25 from Mather RP, SAC (SS). At Natural Bridges SP, SCZ, the adult male Orchard Oriole continued throughout the month, singing vociferously for many observers. On Mar. 27 and 31, a first-year male Orchard Oriole was found here as well (SGe). Up the coast at the San Francisco Zoo, another young male Orchard Oriole was discovered, on Mar. 16 (DM). Just to further confuse the issue at Natural Bridges, a young male Hooded Oriole showed up here Mar. 17 and stayed through the end of the month (AE; mob). Although 6 new Hooded Orioles were found in the final week of March, the bird found at a Watsonville, SCZ, feeder Mar. 15 tied for the county's earliest arrival ever, 9

days in advance of the average (RG). Bullock's Orioles were first reported Mar. 21 in SCZ and SCL (SGe, JD), and many more followed throughout the Bay Area and Central Valley foothills in quick succession. In San Francisco's GGP, the Scott's Oriole was rediscovered Mar. 12 (SD) and seen by many observers thereafter through the end of the month.

Single Red Crossbills were seen in San Francisco Mar. 4 (PS) and Mar. 20 (ME). And we've saved some of the best for last: those nomadic and often elusive Lawrence's Goldfinches really put on a show in March. Roughly 400 birds were reported from 12 major areas in 8 counties (AMA, CLV, FRE, MTY, SAC, SBT, SCL, SJ; mob). Highest densities were in the Panoche Valley, SBT and FRE, where at least 200-250 were tallied on Mar. 24 (JW, MPo).



May Meetings

San Francisco

Please note the different time and location for this meeting. Golden Gate Audubon Society's May San Francisco program will be on **Friday, May 10, at the Strybing Arboretum in Golden Gate Park**, near the 9th Avenue entrance. If you can, please join us for this special Bat outing. We will meet from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Whether swirling out of inky black caves or possibly roosting in buildings, many of us seldom give a thought to bats and their vital place in our world. Unless you are in a steel-and-glass downtown office tower, chances are, at least during summer months, you're within 50 feet of a bat. If this interests you – even a little – please join us for this month's program. Curt Black, environmental scientist with the EPA, and Patricia Winters, Education and Rehabilitation Director of California Bat Conservation Fund, will give a multimedia presentation titled, "Bats, The Other Flying Vertebrates" They will talk about the sounds bats use to navigate and capture their food and

the tools researchers use to analyze those sounds. They will discuss the overlapping conservation needs of California's birds and bats. They will describe steps you can take that work to replace roosting habitat lost to urbanization, including landscaping with native plants and the proper construction and installation of bat houses. After the talk we'll go outside with bat detectors to eavesdrop on some of our local bats that may be foraging in the arboretum.

East Bay

For the May East Bay program – the last meeting of the season – Harry Fuller will talk about the Natural History of San Francisco. If you can, please join us at the Northbrae Community Church on Thursday, May 16. We will meet socially from 7:00 to 7:30, then Harry will do his presentation from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

A time traveler returning to San Francisco from three hundred years ago would find only a few familiar things: the Golden Gate, the Pacific,

Continues on page 11



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